



NORTHWEST VERMONT RAIL TRAIL COUNCIL

c/o Northwest Regional Planning Commission • 7 Lake Street, Suite 201 • St. Albans, VT 05478
Phone: 802-524-5958 • Fax: 802-527-2948

AB 44-14
#E1-476
RQ

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January 21, 2004

AB-444 - (SUB-NO. 1X)

Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
Room 500, 1925 K. Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Lamoille Valley RR Co. _ Abandonment Exemption _ In Caledonia, Washington,
Orleans, Lamoille, and Franklin Counties, VT
Surface Transportation Board, Docket No. AB-44 (Sub-No. 1X)

To whom it may concern,

The Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council would like to express its support for railbanking the Lamoille Valley Rail Road towards its conversion to a multi-use trail, especially in view of the fact that the economic failure of the railroad has made that use financially unfeasible. As a recreational path, the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail would intersect the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail at Sheldon Junction, VT. In a survey of MVRT users that we conducted in 2003, many respondents mentioned their desire to see the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail become a reality and many others requested that the MVRT be extended or linked to other trails. We have been told that for many out-of-state bicyclists (by far the greatest users of the MVRT), our 26-mile trail is not considered long enough to make the MVRT a destination. A Lamoille Valley Rail Trail would change this view of the MVRT and would be a huge asset in bringing Vermonters and tourists from the more populous areas of the state to Franklin County, a very rural and agricultural part of northern Vermont.

We support the conversion of the Lamoille Railroad corridor into a Rail Trail for recreational use by bicyclists, walkers, snowmobilers and horseback riders.

As a volunteer, non-profit organization, the Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council works for the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail (MVRT), a 26-mile long recreational path located in northwestern Vermont. The Council represents communities along the trail, trail users, and local businesses; we advise the State on local trail issues, assist trail users, help make trail improvements, and raise funds for maintenance projects and amenities such as benches and picnic tables.

Yours truly,

Raymond Larose, Chair

cc James B. Fitzgerald, Lamoille Valley Railroad Company